

# Israel @ 70

Achievements and Challenges

Through the Eyes of Contemporary Israeli Literature

Zot Hashira - Study Kit

1998 - 2008

The Sixth Decade

1998 - 2008

## The Sixth Decade

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## Achievements I- Start Up Nation

### CHAPTER 2 (Excerpt) Dan Senor – Saul Singer

#### Battlefield Entrepreneurs

*The Israeli tank commander who has fought in one of the Syrian wars is the best engineering executive in the world. The tank commanders are operationally the best, and they are extremely detail oriented. This is based on twenty years of experience—working with them and observing them.*

—ERIC SCHMIDT

ON OCTOBER 6, 1973, as the entire nation was shut down for the holiest day of The Jewish year, the armies of Egypt and Syria launched the Yom Kippur War with a massive surprise attack. Within hours, Egyptian forces breached Israel's defensive line along the Suez Canal. Egyptian infantry had already overrun the tank emplacements to which Israeli armored forces were supposed to race in case of attack, and hundreds of enemy tanks were moving forward behind this initial thrust.

It was just six years after Israel's greatest military victory, the Six-Day War, an improbable campaign that captured the imagination of the entire world. Just before that war, in 1967, it looked like the nineteen-year-old Jewish state would be crushed by Arab armies poised to invade on every front. Then, in six days of battle, Israel simultaneously defeated the Egyptian, Jordanian, and Syrian forces and expanded its borders by taking the Golan Heights from Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.

All this gave Israelis a sense of invincibility. Afterward, no one could imagine the Arab states risking another all-out attack. Even in the military, the sense was that if the Arabs dared attack, Israel would vanquish their armies as quickly as it had in 1967.

So on that October day in 1973, Israel was not prepared for war. The thin string of Israeli forts facing the Egyptians across the Suez Canal was no match for the overwhelming Egyptian invasion. Behind the destroyed front line, three Israeli tank brigades stood between the advancing Egyptian army and the Israeli heartland. Only one was stationed close to the front. That brigade, which was supposed to defend a 120-mile front with just fifty six tanks, was commanded by Colonel Amnon Reshef. As he raced with his men to engage the invading Egyptians, Reshef saw his tanks getting hit one after another. But there were no Egyptian enemy tanks or antitank guns in sight. What sort of device was obliterating his men?

At first he thought the tanks were being hit by rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), the classic handheld antitank weapon used by infantry forces. Reshef and his men pulled back a bit, as they had been trained, so as to be out of the short range of the RPGs. But the tanks kept exploding. The Israelis realized they were being hit by something else—something seemingly invisible. As the battle raged, a clue emerged. The tank operators who survived a missile hit reported to the others that they'd seen nothing, but those *next* to them mentioned having seen a red light moving toward the targeted tanks. Wires were found on the ground leading to stricken Israeli tanks. The commanders had discovered Egypt's secret weapon: the Sagger. Designed by Sergei Pavlovich Nepobedimyi, whose last name literally means "undefeatable" in Russian, the Sagger was

created in 1960. The new weapon had initially been provided to Warsaw Pact countries, but it was first put to sustained use in combat by the Egyptian and Syrian armies during the Yom Kippur War. The IDF's account of its own losses on both the southern and northern fronts was 400 tanks destroyed and 600 disabled but returned to battle after repairs. Of the Sinai division's 290 tanks, 180 were knocked out the first day. The blow to the IDF's aura of invincibility was substantial. About half of the losses came from RPGs, the other half from the Sagger. The Sagger was a wire-guided missile that could be fired by a single soldier lying on the ground. Its range—the distance from which it could hit and destroy a tank—was 3,000 meters (or 1.86 miles), ten times that of an RPG. The Sagger was also far more powerful.

1. Each shooter could work alone and did not even need a bush to hide behind—a shallow depression in the desert sand would do. A shooter had only to fire in the direction of a tank and use a joystick to guide the red light at the back of the missile. So long as the soldier could see the red light, the wire that remained connected to the missile would allow him to guide it accurately and at great distance into the target

2. Israeli intelligence knew about the Sagers before the war, and had even encountered them in Egyptian cross-border attacks during the War of Attrition, which began just after the 1967 war. But the top brass thought the Sagers were merely another antitank weapon, not qualitatively different from what they had successfully contended with in the 1967 war. Thus, in their view, doctrines to oppose them already existed, and nothing was developed to specifically address the Sagger threat.

Reshef and his men had to discover for themselves what type of weapon was hitting them and how to cope with it, all in the heat of battle. Drawing on the men's reports, Reshef's remaining officers realized that the Sagers had some weaknesses: they flew relatively slowly, and they depended on the shooter's retaining eye contact with the Israeli tank. So the Israelis devised a new doctrine: when any tank saw a red light, all would begin moving randomly while firing in the direction of the unseen shooter. The dust kicked up by the moving tanks would obscure the shooter's line of sight to the missile's deadly red light, and the return fire might also prevent the shooter from keeping his eye on the light.

This brand-new doctrine proved successful, and after the war it was eventually adopted by NATO forces. It had not been honed over years of gaming exercises in war colleges or prescribed out of an operations manual; it had been *improvised* by soldiers at the front.

## **CHAPTER 7 (Excerpt)**

### **Immigration - The Google Guys' Challenge**

*Immigrants are not averse to starting over. They are, by definition, risk takers. A nation of immigrants is a nation of entrepreneurs.*

—GIDI GRINSTEIN

.....

The students had been waiting for some time, with the kind of anticipation usually reserved for rock stars. Then the moment arrived. The two Americans entered through a back door, shaking off the press and other groupies. This was their only stop in Israel, aside from the prime minister's office.

The Google founders strode into the hall, and the crowd roared. The students could not believe their eyes. "Sergey Brin and Larry Page . . . in our high school!" one of the students proudly

recalled. What had brought the world's most famous tech duo to this Israeli high school, of all places?

The answer came as soon as Sergey Brin spoke. "Ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys," he said in Russian, his choice of language prompting spontaneous applause. "I emigrated from Russia when I was six," Brin continued. "I went to the United States. Similar to you, I have standard Russian-Jewish parents. My dad is a math professor. They have a certain attitude about studies. And I think I can relate that here, because I was told that your school recently got seven out of the top ten places in a math competition throughout all Israel."

This time the students clapped for their own achievement. "But what I have to say," Brin continued, cutting through the applause, "is what my father would say—'What about the other three?'

Most of the students at the Shevach-Mofet school were, like Brin, second generation Russian Jews. Shevach-Mofet is located in an industrial area in south Tel Aviv, the poorer part of town, and was for years notoriously one of the roughest schools in the city.

We learned about the history of the school from Natan Sharansky, the most famous former Soviet Jewish immigrant in Israel. He spent fourteen years in Soviet prisons and labor camps while fighting for the right to emigrate and was the best-known "refusenik," as the Soviet Jews who were refused permission to emigrate were called. He rose to become Israel's deputy prime minister a few years after he was freed from the Soviet Union. He joked to us that in Israel's Russian immigrant party, which he founded soon after his arrival, politicians believe they should mirror his own experience: go to prison first and then get into politics, not the other way around. "The name of the school—Shevach—means 'praise,'" Sharansky told us in his home in Jerusalem. It was the second high school to open in Tel Aviv, when the city was brand-new, in 1946. It was one of the schools where the new generation of native Israelis went. But in the early 1960s, "the authorities started to experiment with integration, a bit like in America," he explained. "The government said we can't have sabra schools, we must bring in the immigrants from Morocco, Yemen, Eastern Europe—let's have a mix." While the idea may have been a good one, its execution was poor. By the beginning of the 1990s, when large waves of Russian Jewish immigrants began to arrive following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the school was one of the worst in the city and known mainly for delinquency. At that time, Yakov Mozganov, a new immigrant who had been a professor of mathematics in the Soviet Union, was employed at the school as a security guard. This was typical in those years: Russians with PhDs and engineering degrees were arriving in such overwhelming numbers that they could not find jobs in their fields, especially while they were still learning Hebrew. Mozganov decided that he would start a night school for students of all ages—including adults—who wanted to learn more science or math, using the Shevach classrooms. He recruited other unemployed or underemployed Russian immigrants with advanced degrees to teach with him. They called it Mofet, a Hebrew acronym of the words for "mathematics," "physics," and "culture" that also means "excellence." The Russian offshoot was such a success that it was eventually merged with the original school, which became Shevach-Mofet. The emphasis on hard sciences and on excellence was not in name only; it reflected the ethos that new arrivals from the former Soviet Union brought with them to Israel.

Israel's economic miracle is due as much to immigration as to anything. At Israel's founding in 1948, its population was 806,000. Today numbering 7.1 million people, the country has grown almost nine fold in sixty years. The population doubled in the first three years alone, completely overwhelming the new government. As one parliament member said at the time, if they had been

working with a plan, they never would have absorbed so many people. Foreign born citizens of Israel currently account for over one-third of the nation's population, almost three times the ratio of foreigners to natives in the United States. Nine out of ten Jewish Israelis are either immigrants or first- or second generation descendants of immigrants.

## Achievement II

- New Israeli Humor
  - The Story Victorious Etgar Keret

This story is the best story in the book. More than that, this story is the best story in the world. And we weren't the ones to come to that conclusion. It was also reached by a unanimous team of dozens of unaffiliated experts who - employing strict laboratory standards - measured it against a representative sampling taken from world literature. This story is a unique Israeli innovation. And I bet you're asking yourselves, how is it that we (tiny little Israel) composed it, and not the Americans? What you should know is that the Americans are asking themselves the same thing. And more than a few of the bigwigs in American publishing stand to lose their jobs because they didn't have that answer at the ready while it still mattered.

Just as our army is the best army in the world - same with this story. We're talking here about an opening so innovative that it's protected by registered patent. And where is this patent registered? That's the thing, it's registered in the story itself! This story's got no shtick to it, no trick to it, no touchy-feely bits. It's forged from a single block, an amalgam of deep insights and aluminum. It won't rust, it won't bust, but it may wander. It's super contemporary, and timelessly literary. Let History be the judge! And by the way, according to many fine folk, judgment's been passed - and our story came up aces.

"What's so special about this story?" people ask out of innocence or ignorance (depending on who's asking). "What's it got that isn't in Chekhov or Kafka or I-don't-know-who?" The answer to that question is long and complicated. Longer than the story itself, but less complex. Because there's nothing more intricate than this story. Nevertheless, we attempt to answer by example. In contrast to works by Chekhov and Kafka, at the end of the story, one lucky winner - randomly selected from among all the correct readers - will receive a brand-new Mazda Lantis with a metallic gray finish. And from among the incorrect readers, one special someone will be selected to receive another car, cheaper, but no less impressive in its metallic grayness so that he or she shouldn't feel bad. Because the story isn't here to condescend. It's here so that you'll feel good. What's that saying printed on the place mats at the diner near your house? ENJOYED YOURSELF - TELL YOUR FRIENDS! DIDN'T ENJOY YOURSELF - TELL US! Or, in this case - report it to the story. Because this story doesn't just tell, it also listens. Its ears, as they say, are attuned to every stirring of the public's heart. And when the public has had enough and calls for someone to put an end to it, this story won't drag its feet or grab hold of the edges of the alter. It will, simply, stop.

<http://ingwon.tumblr.com/post/116342318932/the-story-victorious-by-etgar-keret>

○ Feldermouse at the Olympics

Ha-Chamishia Ha-Kamerit



Feldermouse at the Olympics is one of the best known skits of the “Chamber Quintet” an Israeli comedians group. In this skit the managers of the Israeli delegation to the Olympics in Germany, are intervening to get the Israeli athlete, who is not “very fast” rather slow, by their

own admission, some advantage over the other runners. The whole scene and especially the arguments used to convince the German referee, are making fun of Israel’s inclination to portray itself as victim.

○ Arab Labour – The Car

Sayed Kashua



“The Car” is the first episode of an Israeli sitcom series called Arab Labour – written by Sayed Kashua, A well-known Arab Israeli writer who lives in the USA as of 2014.

His tongue-in-cheek humour offers an insight into the complex relations between Jews and Arabs in contemporary Israel. In this episode note the different aspects of relating

to cars; driving, repairing, road safety and security as they play out for Jews and Arabs. Lookout for prejudiced, even racist vocabulary on both sides.



## Challenges I

- Riots of Israeli Arab Citizens - 2000
  - On Artistic Freedom in the National Era

Salman Masalha

Because I am not a state, I have no  
secure borders, or an army guarding  
its soldiers' lives night and day. And  
there is no colored line drawn by a dusty  
general in the margins of his victory.  
As I am not a legislative council,  
a dubious parliament, wrongly called  
a house of representatives. As I am not  
a son of the chosen people, nor am I  
an Arab mukhtar. No one will falsely  
accuse me of being, supposedly,  
a fatherless anarchist who spits into the  
well around which the people feast  
on their holidays. Rejoicing at their  
patriarchs' tombs. Because I am not  
a fatalist, or a member of an underground  
that builds churches, mosques and synagogues  
in the hearts of children. Who will no doubt die  
for the sake of the Holy Name in Heaven.  
Because I am no excavation contractor or earth  
merchant, not a sculptor of tombstones polishing  
memorials for the greater glory of the dead.  
Because I have no government, with or  
without a head, and there is no chairman  
sitting on my head. I can, under such  
extenuating circumstances, sometimes  
allow myself to be human,  
a bit free.

## על חפֿש היצירה בעדן הלאָמי

מכּיּון שְׁאַיננִי מְדִינָה, לֹא גְבוּלוֹת  
בְּטוּחִים לִי, אוֹ צָבֵא שְׁשׁוּמֵר יוֹם  
וְלִילָה עַל חַיֵּי חֵילִיו. וְאַיִן קוֹ  
צָבֵעוֹנִי שְׁמַתַּח גִּנְרֵל מְאַבֵּק בְּשׁוּלֵי  
נְצַחוֹנוֹתָיו. מְכִיּוֹן שְׁאַיננִי מוֹעֲצָה  
מְחֻקֶּקֶת, פֶּרֶלְמָנֵט מְפֻקֶּקֶת, שְׁנֻקְרָא  
בְּטָעוֹת כְּמִשְׁכֵּן נִבְחָרִים. מְכִיּוֹן  
שְׁאַיננִי בֶּן לָעַם הַנִּבְחָר, וְאַיִנִּי  
גַם מְכַתֵּר עֶרְבִי. לֹא יָבוֹא אִישׁ אֵלַי  
בְּטָעוֹת שׁוֹא שְׁאַנִּי, כְּבִיכּוֹל,  
אֲנֶרְכִּיסֵט חֶסֶר אֵב שְׁיֹרֵק לְבָאֵר  
שְׁאַלִיָּה מְסֻבִּים בְּנֵי הָעַם בְּחֻגֵיהֶם.  
צוּהֵלִים עַל קִבְרֵי אֲבוֹתֵיהֶם.  
מְכִיּוֹן שְׁאַיננִי פֶטְלִיסֵט, אוֹ חֵבֶר  
בְּאַרְגוֹן מְחַתֶּרֶתִי שְׁבוּנָה כְּנִסְיוֹת,  
מְסֻגְדִים וּבְתִי-כְּנִסֵּת בְּלִבְבוֹת הַיְלָדִים.  
שְׁיָמוּתוֹ בְּנֹדָאֵי עַל קְדוּשׁ שֵׁם שְׁמַיִם.  
מְכִיּוֹן שְׁאַיננִי שׁוּם קִבְלָן חֲפִירוֹת  
אוֹ סוּחֵר בְּעֶפֶר, לֹא אֶמֶן מְצֻבוֹת  
מְמָרֵק הַאֲנֶדְרָטוֹת לְתַפְאֶרֶת הַמַּתִּים.  
מְכִיּוֹן שְׁאַיִן לִי שׁוּם מְמִשְׁלָה, עַם  
אוֹ בְּלִי רֹאשׁ, וְאַיִן שׁוּם יוֹשֵׁב רֹאשׁ  
שְׁעוּמֵד עַל רֹאשִׁי. אֲנִי יָכוֹל, בְּנִסְבוֹת  
מְקֻלוֹת שְׁפֹאֲלָה, לְהִרְשׁוֹת לְפַעֲמִים  
לְעֻצְמִי, לְהִיּוֹת בֶּן-אָדָם,  
קֶצֶת חֶפְשִׁי .

**My father – Salman Masalha**

who was born on the slope of the mountain  
and gazed down on the lake,  
never had a passport.  
Or even a laissez-passer.  
He crossed the mountains  
when the borders did not flow  
in the river.  
My father  
never had a passport.  
Not because he didn't have  
a land and a seal.  
Just because the land  
always dwelt calmly  
in the palms of his hands.  
And just as the land  
never slipped from his hands to travel  
overseas,  
Father – too.

**לאבא שלי**

שנולד במורד ההר  
והביט על האגם,  
לא היה דרכון מעולם.  
ואפילו לא תעודת מעבר.  
הוא חצה את ההרים  
כאשר הגבולות לא זרמו  
בנהר.  
לאבא שלי  
לא היה דרכון בעולם.  
לא מפני שלא היתה לו  
ארץ וחותם.  
רק מפני שהארץ  
תמיד שכנה לה שם בנחת  
בכפות ידיו.  
וכמו שהארץ לא חמקה  
מידיו אף פעם  
ונסעה אל מעבר לים,  
אבא גם.

○ Homeland Hymn

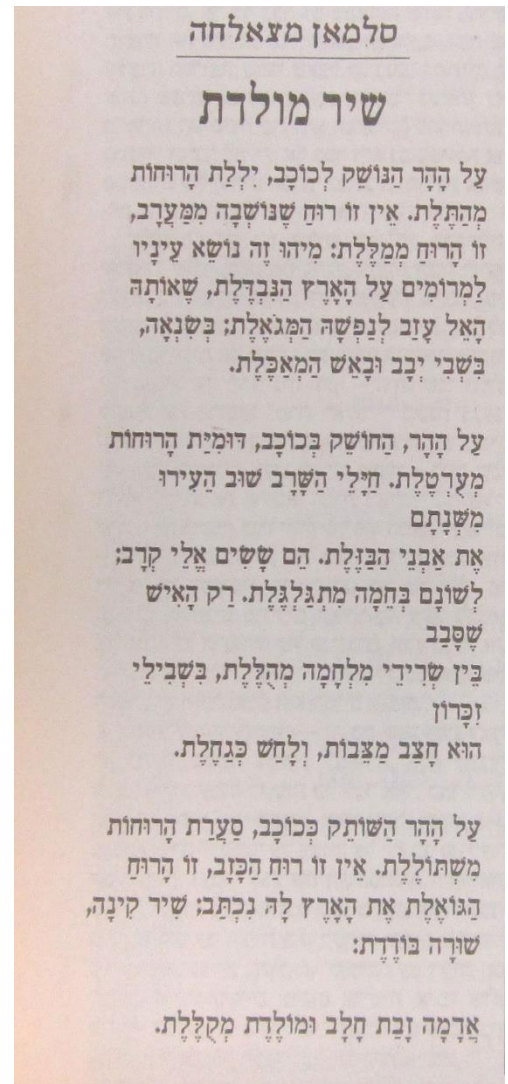
Salman Masalha

On the mountain that kisses a star, the winds  
flail and wail. This is not a wind that blew in  
from the west, it is a wind that sighs:  
Who lifts up his eyes on high  
to the bereft land, which God has left  
to its own devices, filthy with hate, imprisoned  
in plaints and the flame of the sword?

On the mountain that lusts for a star, the wind's  
silence is naked. Sandstorm soldiers again  
have shaken the basalt boulders from slumber,  
hungering for battle, tongues  
tasting the salt of assault. Only the man  
who roamed among ruins of a glorified war  
hewed gravestones in memory's  
path, and whispered like embers.

On the mountain mute as a star,  
the furious windstorm raves.  
Not the insolent wind but the redemptive wind  
of the land addressed in a poem of lament,  
a single line:

Land flowing with milk and a homeland damned.



Ayman Agbaria

#### WRITING IN HEBREW

I have a role for you.  
Perfect for you:  
The hero's best friend.  
You get to be with the heroine too.  
I promise some close ups.  
And you might have a chance to sing too.  
Come on,  
Do you agree to write in Hebrew?

#### DEBATE

— Our bodies are better.  
— Our bodies are more precious.  
— Our blood is finer.  
— Our blood is sweeter.  
— Our dead are martyrs, yours are murdered.  
— Your dead will become earth, ours will be higher.  
— I am the victim and you are the killer.  
— I will remain and you will vanish.  
Like this, the generals speak  
like this, they debated:  
Which is thicker?  
The tear of a mother or the powder of a bullet?

○ WHY DID THEY SELECT US TO BE THEIR VICTIMS? Ayman Agbaria

They axed all the trees in the forest  
For one ship.  
They stripped us all  
The dead and the living  
For one sail.  
Then they commanded us to weep  
And wave for them  
So that the sea would be large enough for them to depart  
And the wind would be suitable  
For them to leave suddenly  
Before we learned their language.  
Yet we will write our story as we wish  
half the truth is for us  
and half the lie is for them.  
We will elaborate where nature permits  
And we will curtail where there is grass to cover  
We will tell their story as we would like to remember ourselves:  
Victims facing ascendancy  
(Exactly as this poem begins)  
We will teach our children we were confident of victory from the beginning  
And we allowed them to seize the forest  
Because they were axing their absence.  
We will write as we wish.  
But they will leave us and we will never know  
why did they select us to imitate their hatred of nature?  
Why did they train us to pause at the seashore?  
Why do we still stew over their axes?

© 2006, Ayman Agbaria

## **Flesh and Blood Pain**

Nidaa Khury

1.

The past breaks me up  
These are the crumbs  
Here I am flesh and blood pain  
Poured into words  
Here is my history  
48  
67  
87  
00  
And I am  
Knowingly saying  
The future will come and will break  
Do not say it will not  
Everything  
Since  
We drank from the same well  
You got lost  
And I  
Went away thirsty  
Since then to this very day  
The past is still a glass  
Thorns and soil

2.

The past breaks me up  
Here I am flesh and blood pain  
Poured into a page  
Here, I am saying...the finishing  
times  
Good signature... (Hatima Tova)  
The coming future...continuation of  
the past

3.

The Book of Books  
Is not completed  
Here are the chapters  
The Exodus  
The exile  
The kingdom  
The angels  
The judges  
The return  
I know... I will tell you  
I know  
Since...  
The well

4.

Jesus your servant  
God is your future  
Go thy my son  
Wherever  
I am your servant  
Your future is  
Go thy.. לך לך  
Where to...  
My son...  
Where are you?  
How is it still  
All of heaven  
The city a reflection...  
And still applauding  
Thinking weddings?

**כאב בשר ודם**  
נידאה חורי בגוף אחד

1

.  
העבר שובר אותי  
ואלה הפרורים  
הנה אני – כאב בשר ודם  
שפוך במילים  
הנה תולדותי  
48  
67  
87  
00  
והנני  
אומרת מתוך ידיעה  
העתיד יבוא ישבר  
אל תגיד שלא  
הכל  
מאז

שתינו מאותה באר  
אתה אבדת  
ואני  
הלכתי צמאה  
מאז עד עצם היום  
העבר עודו כוס  
קוצים ועפר

2.

העבר שובר אותי  
הנה אני.... כאב בשר ודם  
שפוך בדף  
הנה אומר... מועדי הגמר  
חתימה טובה...  
העתיד הבא...המשך לעבר.

3.

ספר הספרים  
לא נשלם  
הנה הפרקים  
היציאה  
הגלות  
המלוכה  
המלאכים  
השופטים  
השיבה  
אני יודעת... אומר לך  
אני יודעת  
מאז....  
הבאר.

4.

עבדך ישו  
עתידך אלוהים  
לך לך בני  
לאן שפניך  
עבדך אני  
עתידך הוא  
לך לך...  
לאן...  
בני....  
איכה?  
איך עדין  
גן עדן....במלואו  
והעיר בבואה...  
ועדין מחיאות הכף  
חושבות חתונה?



## The Time Is Over Nidaa Khoury

For more than thirty years  
For every newscast  
The newsreader has come on time,  
At the same time, to the same screen,  
And he told me what had taken place  
What they said and what they did and what they meant  
And he said it's all they know and they don't know more  
And he's finished with weather forecast –  
Dry and cloudy, gales and heat.  
For more than thirty years  
For every newscast  
I have come on time,  
At the same time, to the same screen  
And told the newsreader I don't want to see what I see  
I don't want to hear what I hear  
Neither to know what is taking place  
Not what they say, nor what they do, nor what they mean  
And the weather forecast  
Doesn't trouble me.  
Today  
The newsreader comes right on time,  
At the same time, to the same screen.  
And he tells me he has been coming here for thirty years  
To reach me every day to forget the day gone by,  
To make me faultlessly forgetful  
He says all I have to do is remember one key thing  
Exactly as he does  
To repeat what they have said,  
To do what they have done,  
To accept what they have accepted  
To eat what they have eaten  
Live how they had lived  
And so on and so on...  
Until his time is over and he forgets the weather forecast  
And I, too, forget to tell him  
That these people, in this country  
Every day  
Are dying.

זמננו תם

זה יותר משלושים שנה בכל מהדורת חדשות  
בא השדרן תמיד באותה שעה אל אותו מסך  
ומספר לי מה קרה מה אמרו מה  
עשו למה התכוננו ואומר  
שזה כל מה שהם  
יודעים הם לא  
יודעים יותר ומסיים בתחזית  
יבש מעונן חם סוער

זה יותר משלושים שנה בכל מהדורת חדשות  
אני באה תמיד באותה שעה אל אותו מסך  
ומודיעה לשדרן שאינני רוצה  
לראות מה שאני רוצה אינני רוצה  
לשמע מה שאני שומעת  
ולא לדעת מה קרה מה אמרו מה  
עשו למה התכוננו ולא אכפת לי  
מהתחזית

היום בא השדרן כמו תמיד באותה שעה אל אותו מסך  
וספר לי  
שהוא בא כל יום זה יותר משלושים שנה  
לומר לי לשבת את יום אתמול כי עבר  
צריך ללמוד לשבת הוא אומר ורק דבר  
אתד על לזכר כמוהו בדיוק לחזור

על מה שאומרים להסכים עם מה שמסכימים לסרב  
למה שמסרבים לאכל מה שאוכלים לחיות  
כמו שחיים  
רק

תם זמנו והוא שכח  
את התחזית וגם אני  
שכחתי לומר לו שכאן  
מדי יום ביומו  
אנשים מתים.  
28.4.97

תרגום: חנה עמית כוכבי

## Challenges II

- The Disengagement

**Palestinian Souls** Dotan Arad Mashiv Haruah, fall 2000)

A.

Palestinian souls  
Are dancing on my balcony  
Under the white crescent moon  
Dancing, never touching  
Keeping a safe distance  
Leaving pale footprints  
On the tiles

Salam Aleikum  
Aleikum Salam  
(Three times)

Palestinian souls are behind the wall (Kotel)  
Looking for cracks.

B.

Palestinian souls  
Are hiding in my house  
Behind the furniture  
The whit-washers can't  
Hide their fingerprints  
On the paint.  
Their suitcases on their knees  
They are waiting for a sign

The souls of Palestinians are thickening  
Multiplying (Becoming pregnant)  
Woven in secret  
From lettered codes  
On the radio  
Already they stand before me  
Bloodless and boneless  
Without flesh or limbs  
With no kaffiyeh  
Playing words to me in classical Arabic  
Plucking on the strings of guilt.  
I take them for walk in the garden.  
Don't forget to prune the cherry tree  
and don't sit beneath the vine

נשמות פלסטיניות – דותן ארד

א.

נשמות פלסטיניות  
רוקדות אצלי במרפסת  
מול הסהר הלבן  
רוקדות ולא נוגעות  
שומרות את מרחק ההרחקה  
מותירות עקבות חורות  
על המרצפת

סלאם עליכום  
עליכום סלאם  
(ג פעמים)

נשמות פלסטיניות עומדות אחר הכתל  
מחפשות את הסדקים

ב.

נשמות פלסטיניות  
מתחבאות אצלי בבית  
מאחורי הרהיטים  
מכבסות המילים לא מצליחות  
למחות את טביעותיהן  
על הסיד  
מזודותיהן על הברכיים  
הן ממתונות לצלצול

ג.

נשמות של פלסטינים הולכות ומתעבות  
הולכות ומתעברות

נרקמות בחשאי  
מצרופי האותיות  
של מלות הדיו  
וכבר עומדות מולי  
ללא בשר ועצם  
ללא דם וידיים  
ללא כאפיה  
מנגנות לי מלים בערבית גבוהה

אני לוקח אותן לסיור בגינה  
אל תשכחו לגזום את הדבדבן  
ואל תשבו מתחת לגפן  
בשלווה מדמה  
הבית הזה בנוי על קמורים  
תזהרו  
נפצו את כל החלומות  
בגרזן

הסירו את קליפת המילים  
מעל האדמה

In pretended peace  
This house is built on arches  
                                    Beware  
Smash all your dreams  
With an axe  
Collect all the word-shells from the ground.  
  
Lest you pay the price of exile.

## Akeida ((Binding)

Take your son, your only one  
Your hope  
Your dream  
The one you love  
And sacrifice him at  
One of the mountains that I will tell you..

All the love lumped  
Into pain, almost  
Stuck in his throat ...  
But no.  
He rose at dawn

He saddled his donkey  
And choked the tears and the memories  
The moments of grace and laughter  
In the land of sun and beach  
The vegetable garden  
The home and yard  
The palpitating heart –

God will show the lamb for sacrifice  
My son

He does not need Hasbara  
He is not asking for excuses  
No quotes of written promises ---  
And they both went together.  
And they saw the place from afar  
And he said to the gloating youth  
Sit here  
With the donkey, and the on all the channels  
No stranger will get this; and we will prostrate ourselves  
And we shall return to you

When the hope was bound up  
And they were all ready for Him  
The voice was heard  
No more  
---

And He said  
Because you did not spare your heart and soul from me  
I will bless you  
And I will plant you in this land  
With all my heart and all my soul –

Soon in our times  
Amen.

Ruchama Shapira

## עקידה רוחמה שפירא

קח נא את בנך את יחידך  
את תקותך  
את חלומך  
אשר אהבת  
והעלהו לעולה אל  
אחד ההרים אשר אמר אליך

כל אהבה בגוש  
של כאב כמעט  
עמדה בגונו...  
אך לא.  
וישכם בבקר

ויחבוש את חמורו  
ויכבוש את הדמעות הזכרונות  
רגעי החסד והצחוק  
בארץ השמש והחוף  
גן הירק  
הבית החצר  
הלב מפפר –

אלהים יראה לו השעה לעלה  
בני

הוא לא צריך הסברה  
לא מבקש הצטדקויות  
לא צטוט הבטחות כתובות ---  
וילכו שניהם יחדיו  
וירא את המקום מרחוק  
ויאמר לנערים השמחים לאיד  
שבו לכם פה  
עם החמר הנוער בכל הערוצים  
זר לא יבין זאת: נשתחוה  
ונשובה אליכם

כשהתקוה נעקדה  
וכבר מוכנים למענו הכל  
נשמע הקול  
ולא עוד  
---

ויאמר  
יען אשר  
לא חשכת את לבך את נפשך ממני  
כי ברך אברכך  
ונטעתך בארץ הזאת  
בכל ליבי ובלכ נפשי -

במהרה בימינו

אמן

## **An Invitation to Cry**

**Eliaz Cohen**

To you the good loyal soldier who on that day of the order  
Will approach our dwelling

I will run to you with open arms I will run I will embrace you and  
Lead you.

In front of the entrance I will take hold of your collar, I will tear it to  
The place where your heart is.

Enter, sit with us, the mourners, taste the round pretzels  
Like the children who even now are tumbling on the rug like  
Fate, again houses in Etzion are turning pocked and hollow

Silently we all walk at the end through the rooms of the house:  
Only I and you, my wife, and the walls remember the quarrels and loving,  
Lines that were written and erased as though burned into the book  
Of life.

In your eyes, my good soldier, I will see a tear. Our friends stifle  
Their crying, wrote the poet in 1948, perhaps now it is permitted to cry  
And if there were more time  
We would lie down in green pastures and play again  
The hide and seek game of  
The Song of Songs  
You as my love, I as the beloved. And you, soldier, in the role of the  
Watchman

And I would take you running above the cemetery –  
Here, in an hour of great favor  
I heard *allah* of the muezzin  
As though rising together with the praying of *yehudain*  
Here one can prophesy, here  
If only we had more time

In a whisper you ask, have you packed? As though there were in this  
World a bundle  
Which can contain yearning

You hold back a stream of tears. We go out for a breath of air on  
The porch  
Here I prepared a little corner to write the unfinished novel  
Now from the fig tree in the yard the last leaf falls  
Everything is filled with symbols you say  
You fall on my neck, weeping bitterly  
My good, loyal soldier, now at last it is permitted to cry.

(With daytime anxiety, Shevat 5765, Kfar Etzion 2005)

אליעזר כהן הזמנה לבכי

אלֵיךְ החֵלֶל הַטוֹב הַנָּאֵמָן שְׁבִיּוֹם מִן הַיָּמִים הוּא יוֹם פְּקֻדָּה  
תִּקְרַב לְמַעֲוִיָּנוּ.  
אֲרוּץ אֵלֶיךָ בְּזִרְעוֹת פְּתוּחוֹת אֲרוּץ אֲחַבְּקֶךָ וְאוֹבִילֶךָ  
לִפְנֵי הַפֶּתַח אֲחִי צִנְאוֹרֶךָ, אֶקְרַע בְּךָ קְרִיעָה עַד  
מְקוֹם הַלֵּב.  
תִּפְגֵּס, תִּשָּׁב עִמָּנוּ בִּישִׁיבַת הָאֲבֵלִים, תִּטְעֵם הַכַּעֲכִים הָעֲגֻלִּים  
כְּמוֹ הַיִּלָּדִים שֶׁגַם עָכְשׁוּ מִתְגַּלְגָּלִים עַל הַשְּׁטִיחַ כְּמוֹ  
גֹרֶל, שׁוֹב הַזִּפְכִּים בָּתִּים בְּעֶצִּיּוֹן לִנְקוּבִים וְחִלּוּלִים  
בְּדַמָּמָה גֵּלֶךָ בְּאַחֲרוֹנָה בֵּין חֲדָרֵי הַבַּיִת.  
רַק אֲנִי וְאַתָּה וְהַכֶּתֶלִּים זֹכְרִים רִיבִים וְאַהֲבִים  
שׁוֹרוֹת שֶׁנִּכְתְּבוּ שְׁנִמְחָקוּ כְּמוֹ נִכּוֹת בְּסִפֵּר הַחַיִּים  
בְּעִינֶיךָ, חֵלֶלִי הַטוֹב, אֶרְאֶה דְמָעָה, רַעִינוּ חוֹנְקִים אֶת  
בָּכִים, כְּתֹב בְּתִשְׁׁחַח הַמְשׁוֹרֵר, עָכְשׁוּ אוֹלֵי מִתֵּר לִבָּכּוֹת  
וְאִם הִנֵּה עוֹד זָמָן  
הִינֵנו רֹבְצִים בְּנֵאוֹת דָּשָׁא וְשׁוֹב מְשַׁחֲקִים בְּמִשְׁחָק הַמַּחְבּוֹאִים שֶׁל  
שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים  
אֶת הָרִעָה, אֲנִי הַדּוֹד, אֶתָּה בְּתַפְקִיד הַשׁוֹמְרִים  
וְהַיִּיתִי בְּרִיצָה לֹקַח אוֹתָךְ מֵעַל לְבֵית הַקְּבָרוֹת,  
לְכָאן, בְּשַׁעַת רַעְוָא דְרַעְוִין אַחַת  
שְׁמַעְתִּי תִפְלֵלַת הַמוֹאֲזִין כְּתִפְלֵת יְהוּדָאִין יַחַד עוֹלוֹת  
כָּאן אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְנַבֵּא, כָּאן  
אִם רַק הִנֵּה לָנוּ עוֹד זָמָן  
בְּלַחֲשָׁה אֶתָּה שׁוֹאֵל: אֶרְזֻתָּם? כָּאֵלּוּ יֵשׁ בְּזֶה הָעוֹלָם הַצָּרוֹר  
שְׂכָה זָכִיל גְּעֻגּוּעִים.  
אֶתָּה עוֹצֵר בְּשִׁטָּף הַדְּמָעוֹת. יוֹצֵאִים לְנֶשֶׁם עַל הַמֶּרְפֶּסֶת  
כָּאן הַכְּנִתִּי לִי פֶנֶה קֹטֵנָה לְכֹתֵב אֶת הָרוֹמָן הַלֵּא גְמוּר  
עָכְשׁוּ מֵעַץ הַתְּאֵנָה שֶׁבְּחָצֵר עָלָה אַחֲרוֹן נוֹשֵׁר  
הַכֹּל מְלֵא סְמָלִים אֶתָּה אוֹמֵר  
נוֹפֵל עַל צִנְאוֹרִי בְּבִכִּי וּמְמַרֵּר  
חֵלֶלִי הַנָּאֵמָן, הַטוֹב, עָכְשׁוּ מִתֵּר סוֹף סוֹף לִבָּכּוֹת.

(מפחד לב יומם, שבט התשס"ה 2004 בכפר עציון)

○ Itamar is Disengaging Yossi Sarid

Little Itamar had changed kindergartens this year  
The teachers changed as well  
And now, every morning he refuses to part.  
He weeps for a long time  
Itamar is not a cry-baby at all  
But when he weeps  
His beautiful face is washed by tears  
Even his cheeks are leaking water  
Like a cloudburst  
Like a sudden flood  
At the mouth of the abyss  
As if inside, Itamar, who is crying for his parents,  
there is a gurgling brook,  
His teacher tells me –  
Never mind, you can go,  
All children have separation anxiety,  
It will pass,  
And I want to tell her  
That it never passes  
Itamar's crying  
Never ends  
I stay for another minute, turn about  
I am going away, walking and weeping.

איתמר מתנתק יוסי שריד

איתמר הקטן החליף השנה, גן  
והתחלפו גם הגננות  
ועכשיו, בכל בקר הוא ממאן להפרד  
וממרר בבכי שעה ארוכה.  
איתמר הקטן הוא בכלל לא תינוק בכין  
אבל כשהוא בוכה  
פניו היפים נשטפים מיד בדמעות  
גם לחיים נזלו מים  
כמו שבר ענן  
כמו שטפון פתאומי  
פיתהומי  
כאילו באיתמר המבכה על הוריו  
מפכה מעין.  
הגננת שלו אומרת לי –  
אין דבר, אתה יכול ללכת,  
לכל ילד יש חרדת נטישה,  
זה יעבור לו.  
ואני רוצה להגיד לה  
שזה אף פעם לא עובר  
הבכי הזה של איתמר  
לעולם לא נגמר.  
לרגע אני עוד נשאר, פונה כה וכה  
והולך משם הלוך ובכה.

תפילה לעני Tfila Leani

תפילה לעני כי יעטר, ולפני ה' ישפך שיחו, ה' שמעה תפילתי, ושועתי אליך תבוא, אל תסתר פניך ממני, ביום צר לי

Translation:

A Prayer of the afflicted, when he fainteth, and poureth out his complaint before the LORD.

O Lord, hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee.

Hide not Thy face from me in the day of my distress.

Psalm 102:1-3

Jewish Publication Society Bible (1917)



This video clip dates back to the day of the disengagement, referred to by the settlers as the expulsion from Gush Katif. A large group of young women in prayer for a last minute deliverance.